

# **Voices from the Upper Gutter**

## **The Early Episodes**

### **Danny Dupa and Vito Vaselini**

("Scratch" and "Sniff")

1

Dupa was the big kid that everybody picked on - and he took it. Until one day when he didn't take it no more, and he snapped. And then he found that being crazier than anybody else and wilder than anybody else, didn't matter.

2

After that moment, nobody picked on him again, because they didn't know how far he would go. And he never knew either. And he couldn't control it. It got so people were scared shitless of him. So now he only had to give a look, and people knew he was pissed.

3

When Dupa was fifteen he met Vito. Vito was nineteen at the time, and had just quit the ninth grade.

4

Vito got his first job working at Tower News, the porno parlor of Lowell, cleaning out the booths in the back. When Vito finally became Vito, he could never forget those days. To some men, it would have been a humbling experience, but with Vito, it just made him more angry at the world. He found he would step on anybody to get where he needed to go.

5

He hung around the Celebrity, a strip joint that was always getting busted for underage girls. That's when he met his first piece of ass. She was a black woman named Lucille. Vito lived above Tower News and brought the hooker into his room. When she had to take a leak, she did it in his sink – the bathroom was down the hall.

Now he felt like a man – he felt like he had power. He started to work at the strip joint, kicking out guys who were drunk. Although he was a little shit, he was a tough fuck.

## 6

The owner Bucko needed some more muscle around the place, so Vito recruited Dupa. Compared to Vito, Dupa was a time bomb waiting to go off. And Vito had his finger on the button.

## 7

Vito eventually started selling drugs and managing massage parlors in Lowell.

## 8

There used to be only one hooker in Lowell. Her name was Winnie. Some people say she eventually quit the business and moved to somewhere in New Hampshire. One thing about Winnie, she always kept walking. Never stood around, never hung around, always looked like she had someplace to go.

## 9

Lowell used to have a number of massage parlors, but city officials wanted more money out of them. The parlors said, you're getting enough as it is.

The city said, "Okay, from now on men massage men, and women massage women." The massage parlors all closed down, and hookers started to invade the neighborhoods. But Winnie was there before them.

10

These are the people that Vito hung around with when he was younger – pretend wannabes from the rooming houses,

11

[Vito hustling food stamps.]

12

Vito lived by breaking into homes, getting drunk at McCullough's, ripping off drunks.

13

It wasn't hard for Vito to get to the top of this scum. Someday, it would be his scum, to do whatever he wished with it, to hold it in his hands, to wipe it on the wall like wiping your ass with your hand and having nothing to wipe your hand on – that's Vito.

14

Dupa got throat cancer when he was twenty-four. Rare, but a sign of the tolerance and durability that he would learn to have.

15

After the operation, when they took out his larynx, he always had this crazy

look in his eye. He was safe when he looked crazy. When he looked like he was letting his guard down, that was the time when you had to watch out. He would bite people as hard as he could, like a snapping turtle. He'd find a finger, a small bone, your nose, your ear, a piece of loose skin, and he'd hold on and clamp down like a vise. And he loved it...

16

He didn't take drugs, didn't drink, but he still chain smoked - Pall Malls, non-filters. He excitement was that bite.

17

Vito liked to hold him back like a pit bull, ready to chomp on someone's face at Vito's command. People kept their distance from Dupa when they talked to him, because you never knew what he was thinking, or if Vito had told him to think about you.

Why didn't Vito and Dupa have any family? Sometimes they didn't even trust each other, because they didn't know how the other one was going to react.

18

Neither one had a conscience, or any sense of remorse.

19

The closest thing Vito had to a son was Freddie, one of his alligators. Freddie also had that unpredictability.

# **Lotta Gue**

## **Never was Meant for the Gutter**

1

When her family lost their money, she was thirteen. She had to move into the projects. A new lifestyle, all new friends. Food stamps, behind on the rent, eating toast three days a week. The only time her parents had money was at the first of the month when her mother got her welfare check.

2

Her father Stanley went into a mental institution after he lost his business. At home he was a turnip -- watching television, drinking Kool Aid, and eating Fritos. He never worked again.

3

Lotta became the girl who she used to tease, who smelled because she didn't bathe regularly, who never had money for lunch.

4

Lotta was ashamed when her mother would shop with her at the Salvation Army. She hated wearing other people's clothes. The only time she felt like she was herself was when she was naked.

5

At least the incest with her mother's brother stopped, after more than seven years. He would come around, but he never had the opportunity.

6

This is when Joey would show up. Joey was her other self. Her mother thought she was only being a tomboy, but it was more than that. It was like a demon had possessed her. The anger and hell that was raging inside of her needed to have a release. What was that release? Heroin and shoplifting.

7

Lotta hung around with Louie from the junk yard. His hands were never clean. She always had grease on her panties – hard to sell them babies nowadays. Even after he took a shower, his hands were rough and shadowed with black in the cracks. Lotta would only see him when she needed money. Everything had a purpose. If it didn't have a purpose, Lotta didn't do it. She wanted something. If you didn't have it, she'd find another way to get it when she was Joey.

8

The softer side of Lotta. The side she put up for her mother and her father and the few people she cared about. She had a soft spot for people with disabilities.

9

She didn't take them in, but she recognized their existence and made them feel as if they were truly part of humanity. She worked at a nursing home and was doing good when she was sixteen, and bringing money home to help her mother.

10

She had forgotten about Joey, and Joey had evidently forgotten about her.

11

She felt for the old people that were in the nursing home. She'll never forget the day she came to work and a patient she had become fond of had died and was no longer there. That emptiness was an ugliness that would have normally been too much for her to handle, and prompted Joey to come out.

12

But Joey didn't come out! She had gained the strength from kindness that she had seen, that had been shown to her by the staff of the nursing home, who loved her.

13

Louie, who had been out of her life, came back into her life, wanting a favor. She had learned to be in a safe, constructive environment. Louie had her steal a doctor's script pad, and forge prescriptions for speed.

14

Now she was taking speed with Louie. Eventually they got caught and she lost her job. She was seventeen.

15

She went back to shoplifting and heroin,

16

She eventually went back to Framingham Women's Prison.



# **Snookie Lumps**

## **Just Needed a Friend**

1

Snooky Lumps, left hand girl, with a bend in it, the nutsiest part of every woman you've ever known.

2

She met Lotta Gue in prison when she got sentenced for stealing physicians' scripts.

Lotta Gue and Snookie Lumps were not Lesbians when they met, but spending time together in jail and developing a strong bond and safety with each other gave them the comfort to reveal their inner selves to each other. Eventually they would become carpet munchers. They called themselves the Donut Bumpers in prison.

3

Snookie Lumps' real name was Debbie DuBras. She was a very small-breasted woman who had had to endure two alcoholic step-fathers and an alcoholic mother. Her mother also had a history of severe depression. So Snookie Lumps wasn't coming from the best gene pool.

4

He father was successful, but had developed a new life and a new family. When she was fourteen, she started to run away from home—staying out all night, taking speed. Speed was her main drug of choice, and she chain smoked and was constantly drinking black coffee. Her nerves were on fire.

5

She had a brother named Gene, who started to get involved in selling drugs early and moved away from home.

6

At sixteen Snookie Lumps was put in a foster home with a family named McHenry. They had three children of their own, and three other foster children.

7

That's where Snookie Lumps met her husband Larry. She got pregnant. They got married. He was always robbing places. He got caught and went to jail.

8

After a while she started to hang out on the streets again, leaving her child Larry Jr. at home with her foster parents, who eventually would bring up Larry Jr.

9

Snookie was so wired and so rebellious and so uncontrollable, she never came home. She got arrested buying some coke. She had become a streetwalker, and now was shooting cocaine. This is where she met Lotta. They both needed somebody to trust.

10

Lotta Gue got out of jail after six months and went home to live with her parents. Her father had really hit rock bottom. He had been taking the anti-depressant Haldol, and a pill called Cogentin to make the side effects from the Haldol wear off. He wasn't taking the Haldol, he was just taking the Cogentin

11

He took Cogentin - three times the dosage, which made him feel that he was racing at four hundred miles an hour inside, but feeling motionless. A psychiatric zombie of his own making. This drove Lotta's mother to drink.

12

Now Lotta was living back at home. Her parents never mentioned the incident that put her in jail. As fucked up as they were, they still tried to be supportive and optimistic.

13

They were, until Snookie Lumps got out of jail and moved in with Lotta.

14

Lotta and Snookie would go out for a loaf of bread and come back eight hours later. They would hang around the streets of Lowell and hook. The main pick-up line they used standing on the corner was: "Goin' out? Wanna date?" Cars would drive around the loop until they finally stopped.

15

Twenty bucks for upstairs, forty bucks for downstairs. They'd work a couple of tricks, get up forty or fifty dollars, and cop some brain oil. (Brain oil is any drug that makes you feel better – of course all drugs make you feel better, or you wouldn't take them.)

16

The customers were called dates. Sometimes the customers would fall in love with Lotta, who had a more feminine side. Snookie was a bull dyke. She didn't pull the strings, but she had her fingers in the pie.

17

Sometimes they would talk about their dream date—a man who would let them live with him—he would buy their drugs, and they would occasionally service him. Like a sugar daddy. But most of the men fell in love with Lotta, and Snookie Lumps was always in the picture. They would never let on that they were lovers—this would threaten the date's security.

18

Now they were getting out of control. They never went home. They crashed at other people's houses. Sometimes they were really coke whores, living on the edge, a razor's edge, a fine line between insanity and sanity, no stops at the border. Just a clear clean run into oblivion. That way they could forget about their pain.

19

Snookie Lumps would think of her son, and want to be with him, but she was always fucked up, and her son made Lotta feel a little insecure.

One night they were crashing at a dealer's apartment. They had been up for over four days. They took some ludes and they were out like a light. A friend of the dealer's was there too. He slit his wrists vertically and horizontally up both arms three times. He would have died, but the neighbors heard him banging his head against the wall. The cops kicked the door open, saw the suicide attempt, and called an ambulance. Nobody in the house had heard him. The first person who woke up when the cops broke down the door was the dealer, who dumped his stash of coke into a bucket of acid.

The cops knew what was going on. They woke up Lotta and Snookie and ran them for warrants. Snookie had a warrant issued by her parole officer for skipping a probation appointment. Snookie Lumps went to jail, and you know where Lotta went? To heroin and crime.

Lotta Gue would soon end up in Framingham Women's Prison too.

# **Mr. Tony D'Wonderful**

## **Looking for a Flesh Fix**

1

Tony D'Wonderful met Lotta Gue when she was working the streets. He lived in the neighborhood, and fell in love with her. Snookie Lumps wasn't around to give her that comfort she needed.

2

Tony was a lonely fuck, with a lot of heart and sincerity. His rooming house was in the middle of the Zone, 231 Appleton Street. He lived on the third floor. He had no sink, and roof outside his only window where he sat out to view the action below. He saw the cars driving around, and the women working the streets.

3

He was twenty-eight, and still had not experienced any sexual contact of any kind. After he was twenty-one, he wasn't going to waste it on just anyone. Maybe Fate was telling him that one of these girls would be an unlikely but likely first sexual experience.

4

He started to sit on his front steps and hang out with the girls working the street. He would let them use the bathroom in the hallway to pee, but they were really shooting up coke, or heroin in Lotta's case. But Lotta was doing coke and heroin—the coke reminded her of Snookie Lumps, who she would

write to at least four times a week.

5

Lotta gave Tony that look, that look that said, "You're a part of this fucking human race." Or, "Maybe I can get some mileage out of him." Tony felt as if he was a friend of Lotta's. They had never gone out on a "date" or even spent any time together. Tony saw the hungry feeling that Lotta had inside. Maybe that hungry feeling was for him.

6

Tony saw the goodness, sincerity, and genuineness in Lotta Gue. He was looking into her Human Factor. Tony had this ability, it seemed, to take away a person's human sufferings and take them onto himself. He ended up doing this with Lotta. She had too much pain even for Tony to endure, but her suffering was somewhat relieved.

7

It was a Sunday night. Tony was out on the front steps again. He hadn't seen Lotta in over a week. One thing about street walkers, every time you saw them, you never knew if you would see them again. This made Tony cram a lifetime into a moment whenever he saw Lotta.

8

Lotta came around. Tony was in heaven, but couldn't show it. She would go to the corner, a car would stop, and she would get in. Tony would see it, and wait for her to come back around. She went in and used the bathroom a lot that night. She was thinking about Snookie and the pain the life had inflicted on her. Lotta saw Tony as a good guy, a guy who didn't take drugs

and who didn't appear to go out with the girls. Couldn't hurt to have another friend...

9

It was two o'clock in the morning. Lotta Gue came by one more time. Tony was rambling a mile a minute, trying to keep Lotta's attention. Lotta said, "I hate to cut you short, but I gotta crash." Tony said, "You can crash at my place." Lotta said, "I have a place in Lawrence to crash. It's better to crash there, because I have errands to do there in the morning." Tony had an empty feeling inside. Would he ever get a chance to spend time with Lotta? Was she the woman who would relieve him of his virginity once and for all? Tony had that ugly feeling in his gut, that feeling that he got when he took on other people's woes, making him feel even more empty than before. Lotta saw this, and felt bad for Tony and said to him, "I'll be around next week—maybe we can go out and do something." A care came up, and Lotta got in. Tony went back to his room.

10

A week later Tony found out that Lotta was in jail. He had to be friendly with some of the rather unsavory street walkers. He finally got her full name and where to write her in Framingham.

11

It felt that Tony had already taken on the majority of Lotta's suffering. He wrote her a letter telling her of the goodness and genuineness that he saw in her. He never knew if he would get a reply. But he did after a week. It was the most wonderful letter with the most graceful handwriting. They would write each other and tell about their lives, their hopes and dreams, the agony that life had issued them. But Tony would never have sex with



Lotta. They wrote back and forth for a year.

Here are some of the poems Lotta wrote to Tony during her time in jail:

### **Thoughts of You**

Thinking of the friend you were...  
And how you become, so much more  
The letters, the poems, the smiles you sent...  
Somehow to my heart they all went

And when I'm sad and feeling low...  
I think of you, and my heart will glow.

Burning like a candle bright...  
With you I feel I've won the fight

I found it all.. when I found you,  
You make me feel like someone new

### **My Depression**

Slipping away, away from me... Somewhere in my memory  
To a place that's oh so sad.. Everything there's oh so bad  
I'm somewhere else inside my mind...

I've left the world far behind  
All alone, scared to death... I start to take deep deep breaths  
I try to run, I try to hide... from the nightmare I live inside  
I call out, but no one hears... sometimes I think no one cares  
I reach for you, please grasp my hand...  
Take me from never, never land.  
Bring me back where I want to be... to you and I in reality.

### **My Body**

My body is listening,  
My soul searching for the  
Presence of you, like antennas  
Reaching out grasping for you,  
To take in your essence, your emotions your thoughts  
You are speaking, my body is listening

### **Testing My Heart**

It's easy enough to be pleasant  
When life flows on like a song  
But the one worthwhile, is the one who will smile  
When everything goes dead wrong...  
For the test of the heart is trouble  
And it always comes with years  
And the smile that is worth the praise of the earth

Is the smile that comes through tears.

### **The Essence of Me**

We've enjoyed our love so long  
Our souls have come so close  
That I keep the essence of you  
As you keep mine.

If you deny my presence in your life,  
It would be enough to embrace you and talk  
I give you so much life, that now you must possess  
The essence of me.

I make no attempt to be your master  
I'm nothing, there's no vanity in me  
I give you only what's good in me  
I'm so poor, what else can I give?

### **Dreams of Sand**

Here in my room, all by myself...  
Wishing I were somewhere else...  
Thoughts are drifting like clouds afloat...

to a deep blue ocean on a dreamy boat  
Seeing faces come and go, of people and places  
I just don't know...  
Listening for laughter that isn't there...  
Make believe visions that disappear...  
I open my eyes, I'm forced to land, and I'm all alone  
With my dreams of sand

### **Suspended**

Suspended in time and space  
My love it seems goes to waste  
My smiles, my tears, my joy, my pain, all let out, but all in vain  
I call to you, you do not hear, my state of mine you cannot share  
I'm all alone with what I feel, in this tiny room, it's a big deal  
My emotions are here, alive and real, the strength from within will help me  
deal

### **Do You?**

Do you lie awake and think of me, as I think of you?  
Do you ever really wonder exactly what I do?  
Do you call my name and reach for me deep in the night?  
Do you long to hold me close and make it feel so right?  
Do you weep silent tears, as I do for you?

Do you think of me as often as I think of you?

13

Lotta caused trouble in jail and got her sentence extended.

14

Tony had purchased a car to drive to Framingham to visit Lotta. Tony was occasionally sending her money, even clothing.

15

One day Lotta was finally to get out of the big house. Tony went to pick her up. He was told she got out the day before. He had no way of finding her. Tony drove all the way home empty and alone. He felt rejected. He felt used. He raged inside like he had never raged before. He was about to explode by the time he got home. He had told his friends and family about Lotta, and now he looked like a fool. It would be years before he would be able to live this down.

16

Tony survived and would eventually lose his virginity a few years later with a person who really wanted to be with him.

17

Tony wears his heart on his sleeve. Tony is an easy touch. Tony is centered in his emotions. He's up, he's down, he's over there, sometimes he doesn't know where he is. Don't get him when he's feeling sad, he'll talk your ear off.

18

He wanted to be a lounge singer, but that era was over, for him anyway. He was no Robert Goulet or Wayne Newton. He was just Tony D'Wonderful.

19

Lotta Gue would go on to transform herself into a Mussolini-style feminist unrecognizable even to Tony.

# Sidney Hipple

## **“The Prince of Panties”**

### 1

Sidney Hipple worked at a chemical factory called Step Out Chemicals, where he processed industrial chemicals. He made good money, and did it until he was twenty and got laid off. During this layoff he utilized his free time and started to compose poems and imaginative short stories.

### 2

His life always seemed to be excitement-oriented, looking for that next buzz -- be it Crossroads (a type of speed during the early seventies), Thai stick, a little acid, THC, a little angel dust diet, mescaline, and maybe a beer once in a while, just to be sociable. The bands he was most attracted to were King Crimson, Yes, The Who, Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention – and he had started to discover jazz: Chick Corea – Return to Forever and George Duke and Jean-Luc Ponty.

### 3

Everything was going fine. Everything seemed to be under control, until he bought a thousand hits of Crossroads. He planned on selling them and making money, only most of his friends only smoked weed. He was eating so much speed he was gaining weight. He was smoking it in joints with pot. He sold some of it.



4

This would become a time of transformation in his life. He had always been withdrawn and insulated from life and its experiences. Now he was bold, now he had the courage to speak his mind. He had stuttered since he was six years old. He was now almost twenty. It gave him a confidence, a stability, a grounding. Someone else might have walked around wired, but speed seemed to have a calming effect on him.

5

Maybe because speed makes you babble on, he now had the ability to speak without stuttering. He hadn't developed a conventional, recognizable personality yet, but now he could communicate. And man, did he have a lot of thoughts to tell people. He had been quiet and limited his whole life. Now he could express the joy he had always felt. But nobody seemed to want to listen for long. That's what happens when you take speed: you become a rambling warrior, struggling to hold people's attention. Now he had a voice that needed to be heard.

6

He had always been impulsive by nature. He had developed the deep impulse to go to California and meet Frank Zappa. Now he had a purpose in life, an objective, a reason to live. He had listened to all of Frank Zappa's albums, knew the words to all of his songs, his background, his history. He was creative, and felt he could be of service to Frank Zappa. He stopped taking speed. He rarely smoked pot. He was high on life. This purpose would bring him to places he would not expect to go.

7

When he told his friends of his plans, they had behaved as though they were

in agreement. Sidney had entered a state of invincibility. When he talked to people, his conviction and positive outlook sometimes overwhelmed them. He would soon find out that they assumed he was having a nervous breakdown, and were secretly making plans for him to see a psychiatrist—for his own good. After all, he had this invincible attitude. This wasn't normal. Normal only seems to be what everybody is doing at the time. It's average. Sidney was never average in the first place.

8

He had sold the van he owned and was planning on having his old boss Jerry – who ran a service station – drive him to the airport to go to California. His fellow employees had gathered at the service station, and his boss announced that they would drive him to the airport if he went and saw a psychiatrist first. They believed that he was having a nervous breakdown. His behavior seemed irrational. Nobody packs up and goes to California on a whim without knowing anyone there. But Sidney's motivation was a sense of freedom, a sense of adventure.

9

His friends did not feel this. They had called a local psychiatric hospital, and had told them the situation. Sidney freaked out at their lack of understanding, but had to agree to go, if he was going to get to the airport. When they got there, his friends talked to a psychiatrist. Then the psychiatrist talked to him. Sidney felt as though he was being very logical. He wanted to go to California and meet rank Zappa. Anything wrong with that?

10

Sidney's impulsiveness had proven to be his downfall. The psychiatrist had told Sidney that he thought he was having a nervous breakdown, and that he should admit himself. If he did admit himself, he could sign himself out with a three day notice. If he didn't sign himself in, the psychiatrist would have him court-committed for sixty days.

11

Sidney had places to go, so he signed himself in. He still had good health insurance from his former employment which allowed him to stay at a very high priced, exclusive institution for at least thirty days. His friends left - he was in a hospital room, sitting on a bed, waiting for the doctor to come in to examine him. A young man was masturbating in the bed next to him. Sidney said to himself, "What the hell have I gotten into?" They started giving him a drug called Thorazine.

12

Eventually they let him go to the activities building. He went into the bathroom and climbed out the window. He had escaped. People didn't understand. He understood what was going on. He ran through the woods, saying to himself, "I know I'm not crazy. I know I'm not crazy." He didn't now where he was, but he made it to a road. He still felt invincible.

13

He got a ride to the gas station his boss owned to convince him that he had made a mistake. The people he thought were his friends freaked out.

14

He ran down the road. He was going to go to Boston to see a psychiatrist that would prove that he wasn't crazy. He was having a sloe gin fizz in a bar when his boss came in and convinced him to go back to the hospital.

15

Sidney spent another three weeks in the hospital, and was released when his insurance ran out.

16

He had lost contact with his mother's side of his family, but because his aunt worked at the hospital, his family bonds were re-established.

17

Thank God, the doctor had prescribed over five hundred milligrams of Thorazine a day. His mother had been taking fifty milligrams a day. Five hundred milligrams wasn't even having an effect on him.

18

His mother called the psychiatrist and told him he wasn't going to take it any more. Saved from the life of a zombie—for now.

19

After a while the drug wore off, and Sidney felt human again. He started driving a cab in Lowell, where he now lived. His sense of excitement would

never leave him. His need for getting out of unpredictable situations got him in trouble a couple more times.

20

He wanted to see what it would be like to get arrested, so he threw a bag of marijuana into a police cruiser. The officer refused to arrest him. He insisted, and was arrested. His one night in that cold, smelly cell was unbearable.

21

The next day in court, he lit his jacket on fire. He hadn't eaten in over eighteen hours. This was unbearable!

22

The court had him committed to a state institution.

23

No country club this time. When he arrived on the ward, it was a whole other world. People walking around speaking incoherently. He would be in the land of zombies for thirty days. The people in this institution were from some of the very lowest rungs of society—welfare cases, career loonies, schizophrenics, and an assortment of unique characters.

24

This time they gave Sidney Haldol. Even with a pill that warded off the side effects, Sidney still exhibited the symptoms of the side effects — his neck was stiff, bright lights hurt his eyes, and his leg was always shaking like he

was keeping a beat. His thoughts were racing a mile a minute. He was entering the zombie zone — some people don't come back. Maybe it was because they had no place else to go. But Sidney had someplace else to go, and after thirty days he was released.

25

He lived with some friends for a while and started to drive a cab again.

26

After a while, life had gotten boring again. He ended up in that hospital one more time, because he had no place else to go—this time in, it was a different crowd. Not taking their medication, or rather, faking taking it. Smoking pot once in a while. The food was good. He developed friendships.

27

The year was 1977. He would meet a number of people who would spend their lives in and out of that hospital, but this would be Sidney's last visit to any psychiatric hospital.

28

After a couple of months, they let him out. He had been forced to take the medication, and now he stopped.

29

He was on welfare and living in a rooming house in Lowell. Someone had stolen his food stamps.

30

Sidney, and sometimes a friend, would sneak into the lunch line at the local mental hospital. The cook thought they were day patients.

31

Sometimes he would eat the donuts and drink the coffee at a drop-in center called the Renaissance Club. Couple-day-old donuts were free, and coffee was a nickel.

32

He stopped taking the Nut Juice (the medication) and started to feel normal again.

33

Sidney had few friends in this town. He was green to the ways of the world. Too innocent for city like Lowell. But he would learn. It's interesting the things you find to do when you don't have money. When he got his welfare check, he would have a couple of dollars left over, and walk to Adams Street and buy some joints for a dollar apiece from the Puerto Ricans. You have to have something in life to look forward to. Without it, life is meaningless.

34

It got to the point that he was so broke and so disgusted with life, that it had caused him to smash his hollow-body bass guitar against the radiator in his room, and throw all his clothes, poetry, and music recordings in the dumpster.

35

He sold his imported and rare albums to a friend of one of the tenants for twenty dollars.

36

He went and bought some joints on Adams Street, twelve for ten. They were only pin joints, but Sidney was in heaven.

37

He went to a bar on the outskirts of town that a neighbor with a hook-arm had told him was interesting.

38

He got there and was drinking everything on the table. Sidney got drunk.

39

He left the place and was walking home drunk - he had a long ways to go, and he knew it. He fell down on the side of the road.

40

A car stopped and asked him if he was all right and asked him if he wanted a ride. He said yes and got in. Surprisingly, he was absolutely sober when he got in.

41

They drove him home and smoked some pot with him.



42

Eventually Sidney would get his job back at the cab company and get off the welfare rolls.

43

He would start to write poetry again, and song lyrics. He felt he was again a member of the human race.

44

He would start to read about spiritual matters, astral projection, books by Carlos Castaneda, books about Tibetan and Zen Buddhism, and eventually Idries Shah.

45

This was the grounding that settled his impulsiveness, but still gave him a purpose in life.

46

Soon he would tire of driving a cab, and get a job at the Wash & Fold laundromat. He developed a suitable life situation.

# **Lance Gargoyle**

## **The Handsomest Monster in the World**

1

Lance Gargoyle loved music. Even before he learned to play an instrument, he would make tape recordings of other people's music to the taste of the person he was giving it to.

2

His mother's side of the family were musical, and played a variety of instruments. His mother was the most natural of them in her generation – she played by ear.

3

Lance's first beginnings began when he was out of work in 1975.

4

He walked around town and wrote lyrics in his song book. It started out as "Dead Egg Productions," with songs with titles as obscure as "Dust Diet" (a song about angel dust and loneliness), "Chesty Morgan: Deadly Weapons" (a parody on the fascination of large breasts), "Nymphomania" (something no man could ever get enough of), with lyrics like: "She's waiting / She's moaning / She can't find no more / So it's back to her drawer / To her vibrator for more / NYMPHO-MANIA!!!!!!!"

5

Or "Dust Diet": "I ain't gonna get high no more / My mind's stopped buzzing

and I'm dying on the floor / But before I go / I want some more....ANGEL  
DUST!!! / Yes, I got dusted as you can plainly see / I'd rather have some  
THC / Controlling me, than angel dust."

6

Or, from those times, "Tricky Dicky was a fly / He buzzed around and  
bugged people / Yes I said bugged people! / Flies hang around GARBAGE /  
And they will infect you and your loved ones / Flies are bad / Flies are bad /  
We need some fly paper."

7

Speaking of angel dust, first you roll it in pin joints, then you roll it in fat  
joints and only smoke part of it.

8

Then you're rolling big ones and forgetting to only smoke part of it,

9

A couple more titles from those days: "Accent: the Stuff You Put on Your  
Meat," "I'm Speeding on Spaghetti, 'Cause I've Got Noodles Up My Nose."

10

Lance Gargoyle started experimenting with the bass guitar, some regular  
guitar, a little organ - some of it was simple stuff that he would play, but a  
lot of it was improvisational and very creative.

11

He would record himself ad libbing words to a song or reading his lyrics from one of his song books, and play something creative on whichever instrument he was playing.

12

He even got a couple of his friends one evening to record the lyrics to his songs while he played.

13

He always recorded himself and had a ton of recordings – eight tracks, the people started to use cassettes, and he started recording on cassette.

14

He would bring these tapes with him when he hung around with his friends in their cars, and ask them to play the them. It was his method of quality control.

15

Some things they would like, some things were hard to take.

16

Some things were just too far out there for anybody – even you picked up on a little bit of it, you were freaked.

17

Three or four months had gone by since he had originally started playing and recording, when a friend asked him to play at his party.

18

He brought his two bass guitars, his guitar, and two drumsticks which he would use on the strings.

19

It was a Saturday night he would never forget.

20

He felt awkward but dynamic.

21

Unsure of himself at times, but invincible at other times.

22

He sang his vocal tunes. He became another person. People reacted differently to his lyrical compositions. "Dust Diet," "Chesty Morgan: Deadly Weapons," "Nymphomania," "Tricky Dicky was a Fly."

23

It had not gone over like he planned. When he left, he felt he had let his friends down, and hadn't played well enough.

24

He hadn't played any of the songs they knew - old or popular songs of the time.

25

He hardly had any polish or real skill at this point, but his heart was in it.

26

The next day, he was almost ashamed to show his face around town – feeling the failure that he was, and the humiliation that he would soon encounter. He didn't have a car, and he was hanging around the Gulf station.

27

Eventually some friends stopped down in their cars, and he got in. Some of them were raving about how unique and original he performance had been.

28

At that moment he realized two things: that there was hope for his music, and that he would always improve his music for the people who would enjoy it.

29

Lance would write many more lyrics, and make many more tapes. He hoped to meet Frank Zappa, and had called his record company frequently.

30

He called so much, the receptionists knew him by name.

31

He finally got a hold of Frank Zappa's manager, Worm Incoherent.

32

Being nervous, and stuttering badly, he asked if he could send some of his material – lyrics or tapes – to him for inspection.

33

Lance had sent things like this in the past, but *supposedly* they had never gotten there.

34

Worm said to send it registered mail, which Lance did.

35

This was his big chance to prove that he was a creative individual. A wacky creative individual with potential. He felt that this was his big big BIG chance,

36

He sent almost all of his existing material: eight tracks, cassettes, four or five song books of lyrics, almost everything that he had created and recorded up to that time.

37

Lance waited for the reply. It never came.

38

He called Zappa's office and was told that they couldn't find it, but it must be there somewhere, and they would send it back when it was found.

39

That never happened.

40

Lance would find out years later that it was customary for musicians to send short recordings and limited lyrical sheets, if any.

41

He had lost everything that he had accumulated in his life in music. But he started over.

42

Then Lance moved to Lowell, and started playing and recording again.

43

Eventually he learned guitar and some keyboards.

44

It took him years to recover and start to create lyrics again.

45

He had become friends with a person called Mike (of “Mike and the Spikes,” the band that broke up because of drug problems).

46



Another guy he recorded with was Dan Santana – they both would play distortion guitar – Lance called these recordings “The Distortion Brothers.”

47

Another person who comes to mind is Riff Graft – he played guitar and his hands were like two claws – fat hands with short stubby fingers.

48

He loved wailing lead, and he loved heavy metal, and people like Johnny Winters, and he enjoyed the blues.

49

He still plays to this day, and his hands are still two claws, two fat claws.

50

And he’s manipulating that whammy bar, stretching that note, bending that note UP, or way down, and scraping those strings, baby.

51

He knew every fucking chord in the world.

52

He would sell all his equipment and stop playing (and he always had quality equipment).

53

Months later, he would buy something else and be playing again.

54

When Lance first met Quiggly Atoms, it was a musical match made in heaven.

55

Quiggly, with his polished chords and lead from years of playing and performing with bands. They hit it off right from the first moment they played together.

56

They became lifelong friends. There's so much to say about him, we're going to have to save most of it for another time.

57

Lance and Quiggly became big fans of each other's music.

58

Besides being musically courageous, competent, and masterful, Quiggly was also an exceptional artist and creator of painted plexiglass squeeze-together art work.

59

And he had great hand writing, and he's not balding in the least.

60

Quiggly never lost his sense of humor, or his genuine interest in life.

61

Another person who would become a good friend of Lance's was Dave Id. He was into hard-core industrial music, the Rolling Stones, and very avant garde music.

62

He would become a lifelong member of Lance's quality control team.

63

Some of Dave's music was a little too much for Lance, but he loved some of it.

64

Dave Id had a brother named Edward Id. Actually Lance had met Ed Id first, where he worked at the hospital.

65

Ed Id was even wackier and wilder than Lance. They became fast friends.

66

Years later, Dave Id, Ed Id, Lance, and a friend of his nicknamed "the Panty Man" John Dressell, would record the Panty Man doing his rantings while on alcohol.

67

John, or the Panty Man as he was called among Lance's friends, was from Baltimore, and used to sleep in the graveyard when he got drunk.

68

In Baltimore, if you crashed in a good part of town when you were drunk, they'd put you in jail for a couple of weeks.

69

If you crashed in a bad part of town, you might get your throat sliced.

70

He learned to sleep in the graveyard - it was always quiet and safe for him.

71

The Panty Man was a valued friend of Lance's when he first moved to Lowell. Lance was working but was always broke.

72

John would go on the street and in the bars, for Lance, selling anything Lance had, to get a couple of bucks - a hot plate, a toaster oven, even an old guitar.

73

Sometimes Lance would have pot, and roll some joints up for John to sell. A

buck apiece, or six for five.

74

He would usually give John ten joints, and tell him that he only wanted five or six dollars. John could sell the other joints or smoke them.

75

Some days John was unsuccessful, but would stop back every hour to give Lance a progress report.

76

The Panty Man had no shame about approaching people to sell his wares. He'd go into the bars -- Blackie's, McCullough's, the Copper Kettle.

77

He'd approach people on the street, anybody who he thought would be interested in buying what he had.

78

The Panty Man had a fantasy and an obsession of meeting and marrying Marie Osmond.

79

She was a Mormon, and he was willing to become a Mormon.

80

Somebody tried to get him into the Jehovah's Witnesses, and as normal as

he could appear at times, his inner self and abnormalities would come to the surface, and even the Jehovah's Witnesses would be taken aback.

81

As wacky as he was, they let him in the Army Reserves, until he got even too wacky for them.

82

When he got drunk, it was almost like he was possessed by demons, talking in different voices.

83

But most of the time, he was okay and perfectly sociable.

84

He was a veteran and was on social security, but after he paid his rent, if he paid his rent, he would be penniless two weeks after getting his check. He'd be extravagant at the first of the month when his check came in, buying a new TV for seventy dollars, selling it in a couple of weeks for fifteen, maybe twenty.

85

He scared the fuck out of you if you looked at him, and you didn't know him, because you didn't know what the fuck he was thinking. But he had a good heart, and was never purposely evil.

86

The year was 1981. Lance had an Arp Axxe, an amp, had had a couple of guitars, and was feeling confident.

87

Riff Graft told him about a talent show at a club called The Front Page that happened every Tuesday night – he should check it out and maybe play. Was the world ready for Lance Gargoyle yet?

88

He had played for friends, he had had sung to a record at the famous Commodore Club on the disco open mike night. But not in front of strangers in a real club atmosphere.

89

The owner's name was Walter, and he was a kind of fat guy. He liked having blues bands play there, and loved to come on stage with the bands. He used to make cracks like, "I haven't seen my belly button in over fourteen years" or "When I take a shower, my feet don't get wet." Anyways, he was the owner, and he had a talent show every Tuesday night.

90

It was his way to get people into his club, and free entertainment on a Tuesday night.

91

Lance went there, and performed the first night he went. Walter had a cheap PA with a microphone that always shocked you. Lance played his distortion guitar, and his on the spot ad lib improvisational lyrics. Lance never thought his music was weird or strange before. People at the club found it *unusual*, but saw that Lance was into it. He never recorded that first night, which would be one of his best performances.

92

He would go there almost every week. The emcee would not always give Lance a lot of time. Lance was out there. Eventually he bought a drum machine, played his songs with his Arp Axse, and the lyrics would be set. This new era would create the songs that would make Lance Gargoyle the monster he is today – songs like “Monster Rock,” “S.P.” (short for “Stale Pussy,” a crowd favorite), “Them,” and “Mole People.”

93

Lance would sometimes jam with his friends, but basically became primarily a one-man band.

94

He had a practice room at the Rialto for a while, where he would jam with a drummer he met named Dave Duck. He was the best drummer, the most natural drummer, that Lance would ever jam with.

95

For years, Lance had been recording abstract experimental music, multilayered or multitracked compositions using various percussion sounds including octave oatmeal boxes, glass and wood. He was as much an



experimenter in sound as he was a musician.

96

Eventually he got a small Casio keyboard and would play along with it on guitar, lead of course, and because the melody and bass line and drums were built in, Lance could sing his lyrical compositions and create new ones more easily.

97

Years later he got a gig at The Downtown on Halloween. His Halloween show at the old Front Page was the best he ever had, and it would always be his favorite night of performing.

98

At the Downtown they only had blues, and it took Lance a year of going there before he could get the gig on Halloween. The owner, Speakeasy Pete, didn't think that Lance could draw much of a crowd. Lance got his best buddy, Quiggly Atoms, to play guitar, and got a friend of theirs, Juan Wishwell, to play bass and program the drum machine and synthesizers to Lance's monster songs.

99

They rehearsed a number of times.

100

The night arrived. It was Halloween. Dave and Ed Id opened the evening with Lance doing an industrial piece.

101

Then Lance did a couple of songs with his Casio.

102

Then the band came on: Quiggly, Juan, and Lance. Quiggly and Juan knew a shit load of musicians and friends, and Lance knew a couple too. The place was fucking crowded by the time they went on. It was a roaring success.

103

At the end of the night, the tables were filled with empty beer bottles. Lance had had his night, and had finally made his mark in Lowell. But this was only the beginning.

Here are some of Lance's lyrical favorites that made him the monster he is today:

**S.P.**  
**(Stale Pussy)**

If you've been on a bus  
For a couple of day  
If you 've been on a bus  
For a couple of days  
Or just got out of work  
It was a double shift  
You stop in a club  
You just got paid  
We all get your drift  
When you lift your arm and wave

Gyrating flesh dancing  
On the floor  
The fumes are so bad  
I can't take it no more  
It's getting hard ot breath  
My throat is realy sore  
Curising through the vapors  
Got to get to the door  
Through the moisture  
It's all body fluids

You got perfume coming

Out of your ears

My eyes are drowning in

Sulfuric acid tears

Your odor's so bad

It could start a fad

Groovie solid

Frosty and keen

Groovie solid

Frosty and keen

If you wanna dance all night

And work up a sweat,

Don't come bouncing back to me

With what you got left

Cause when we go home

We're gonna wash that flesh

And I guarantee you honey

That we'll both be refreshed

Europeans take showers

They take them for hours

Put in some soda

Get rid of that odor

Have a novicaine douche

Or a cherry flavored lollipop body cream

And you might be wondering

What all this means

It's called stale pussy

We call it S.P.

And us guys shouldn't laugh

Cause our underwear reeks

Just as same as a chicks

When they wear them for weeks

Take them off, have awash

Give your body some relief

We've all got needs

That's easy to see

But you can't decide

What's attracting

All thes flies

You can pass it off as steak and potatoes

I just had a big meal

Steak and potatoes

Sorry I go sick

Steak and potatoes

Well you know they say

If it smells like cologne

Leave it alone

But if it smells like fish

Make it a dish  
And you remember this  
When you hear S.P.  
From someone like me  
If you 've been on a bus  
For a couple of days  
Or just got out of work  
It was a double shift  
You stop in a club  
You just got paid  
We all get your drift  
When you lift your arm and wave  
We all get your drift  
When you lift your arm and wave...

## **Work Jerk**

I wake up in the morning with a terrible scent  
Thinking of last night and all the money I spent

I finally get my face up  
And head off for work  
To see all my friends  
And act like a jerk

It's the only way  
To get through the day  
Making people wonder  
At the things that I say  
At work

I ain't got a doctor, a lawyer or a banker  
But I've got friends  
At work

I ain't got a minister  
But I'm not all that sinister  
At work

The things I do might seem kinda bold  
But it's my way of not being controled  
At work

You get up in the morning  
And you think about your hair  
You take a shower, brush your teeth  
And think just what you'll wear  
To impress yourself to impress your friends  
Or so you would think or would like to believe  
You're a lonely robot, you're a lonely fool  
You're a copy of your friends  
You're the farthest thing from cool  
You're a puppet in a bubble, a bubble around yourself  
What you see in that bubble  
Is a reflection of your self  
We're all just puppets  
You got to know that first  
If you want to cut those string  
You've got to have almighty thirst  
You can't wake up if you don't know you're asleep  
Come on people  
We ain't got all week

I ain't got a doctor, a lawyer or a banker  
But I've got friends  
At work  
I ain't got a minister  
But I'm not all that sinister  
At work



The things I do might seem kinda bold  
But it's my way of not being controled  
At work

We've got nuns, and none of this, and none of that  
And none of that either  
But I wanna do-do  
Like your mother never did  
Like your mother never did

## **Them**

(end of the scene where Tony meets Lotta)

They never take vacations  
They're always on the street  
They ain't got no time  
To go home and be sweet

They never borrow money  
Not even a dime  
It's they do it's for a Pepsi  
And that ain't no crime

If they need cash  
They'll just hint around  
Talk among themselves  
Put their hooks in some clown

You can't make an omelette  
Without breaking some eggs  
If you get confused  
Start with a leg

They never carry purses  
Jewelry or rings  
They ain't got time

For those silly things

Being discreet in an alley way  
So they heat don't smell their meat  
And take them away

You'll see them in bars  
In lounges and clubs  
It may be a dive  
Or a rock 'n roll pub

They say that their working  
But get off at twelve  
You wait around  
And your pollen pistol swells

You wait aorund till twelve  
You wait around till two  
She finally get off  
And gets down to you

So you go home and shower  
To get off that crud  
Put on some body cream and  
Dilute those suds

(slow tempo)

Funny can be tragic

And tragic, funny

It's not all for kicks,

A high, and money

I'm sorry that's not the way it is

Sleep and work and shoot

Is all they ever seem to do

Well, at least them that I've met

That's all that they do...

It's not a very pleasant thing to see

Or have to be in contact with

But you gotta just have pity

For what people have to live with

To be them

To be them

What they could like...

## **Nancy the Plank**

Nancy the Plank  
She's as flat as a board  
No one wants to go out with her  
Because they think that she's boring

She's flat on the top  
She's flat in the back  
If she ever got pregnant  
She wouldn't even look fat  
The biggest bump that's on her  
Is the wart on her back

She's got a '65 Volkswagon  
Prime it all grey  
In a couple more months  
She's gonna have it all paid  
And then we'll take a cruise  
Down to Burger Lane  
And maybe I'll get lucky  
Maybe I'll get laid

She's Nancy the Plank  
She's the girl of my dreams  
She's in her late twenties

But she looks like nineteen

She's as thin a wafer  
She can hide in the weeds  
As long as I'm with her  
That's I'll that I'll ever need

She's never mean  
She never tells me what to do  
We're so much alike  
We're like Preparation 2

# Neighborhood Weirdo

Lyrics by James Cennamo

In my town I don't get a hello

Or how's by you

They think that I'm strange

A nut with a soda jerk hairdo

Saturday morning when I go to sleep

The mowers start to whirl

And in my head is TNT

Black lingerie and panther fur

And while our skin sticks

To a lay-boy chair

I stand in my room

With my arms in the air

It's okay, keep your daughters locked up

It's all right, keep your wives locked up

How does it feel, oh,

To be the neighborhood weirdo?

Do they try to tell you

Which way the wind blows?

Don't they know  
That I am the  
Neighborhood weirdo  
In your neighborhood  
Weirdo  
In your neighborhood

In my town, I don't say too much  
I don't blast my stereo  
The kids think it's strange  
A real "I don't know"

Monday morning when I go to work  
The gears start to turn  
And in my head is styrofoam  
Dancing food and carpet burns

And while your skin sticks  
To a lazyboy chair  
I stand in my room  
With my arms in the air

It's okay, keep your daughters locked up  
It's all right, keep your wives locked up



How does it feel, oh,  
To be the neighborhood weirdo?

Do they try to tell you  
Which way the wind blows?

Don't they know that I am the neighborhood weirdo  
In your neighborhood, weirdo  
In your neighborhood, weirdo

## **Monster Rock**

In the nineteen nineties if we have a big nuclear war

And everybody's walking around ugly

And your body's all festering with sores

This subject matter you may not like

But radiation acne's really got some bite

That's why I've got this song ready for you

As far as most people are concerned

To be ugly you've got a lot to learn

Ugly could be your feelings

Ugly could be the things that you say

Ugly could be your thoughts or your actions

It wouldn't matter if she had a bald spot

On her head or anywhere else

Or hairy armpits or hairy legs

Or even a moustache

I love Italian girls

Or if she scratched herself in some unmentionable place

It wouldn't matter to me

As long as she had

A nice personality

Was witty

Or had money

Personality was witty or had money

I love to rock because I'm a rock-and-rollster

I love to rock because I'm a rock-and-rollster

I love to rock because I'm a rock-and-roll monster

Make me your M-O-N-ster

Make me your M-O-N-ster

Make me your M-O-N-ster today

Lance Gargoyle, friend of the ugly

Lance Gargoyle, friend of the ugly

A monster among men and women

And children over eighteen

That's lean

But I've got to say

That I'm a rock-and-rollster

That I'm a rock-and-rollster

It's only monster rock

Once it gets going, it ain't gonna stop

It's monster rock and roll

Once it gains momentum, it'll be out of control

Etc. etc. etc.

## **Butch**

Well this is a story, about a chick  
Who used to be a tractor-trailer driver  
Driving on the highway  
Her name was Butch  
That was her handle  
She was a C B er

She was a C B er  
She asked me if I had any soda  
She was from Minnesota  
She asked me if I had any soda

Well I used to work in a malt shop  
Making malted milk shakes all day

After work  
I used to take a cruise down to burger lane  
She was a C B er  
She asked me if I had any soda

But I could be a soda jerk in  
I could be a soda jerk in  
Some other other town  
In some other town

In some other town

In some other town

She was a C B er

She asked me if I had any soda

She was from Minnesota

She asked me if I had any soda

But I could be a soda jerk in

I could be a soda jerk

And she could go back to New York City

She used to be a stripper

In New York City

She was the only

Midget stripper

She used to put lighter fluid on her breasts

And her pubic area

And lit it on fire

She was kind of kinky

She tried to get a job somewhere else

But no one would hire her

She finally got her C B license

She finally became a tractor trailer driver

And her name was Butch

And her name was Butch

B-U-T-C-H

B-U-T-C-H

B-U... ....T-C-H

And her name was Butch

## **Mole People**

(for the two Edies I love)

Mole people  
Are basically beatniks  
Mole people  
They're lots of fun  
They only come out at night  
You'll never see 'em under the sun  
You'll never see 'em under the sun

They're more stylized  
Than they used to be  
Back in the mid fifties  
Or in sixty-three  
Or in sixty-three

See them cruise down the boulevards  
Trying to catch 'em can be kind of hard  
They're not stupid, they're always on guard  
For coolie types and preppies in cars  
They can be invisible

It's a severe kind of creative craziness  
But not in a negative fashion  
They're not aggressive

They mind their own thoughts

They're not aggressive

They mind their own thoughts

They've got things to do

Like cleaning up their karma

How about you?

Self-study practice

Is what they're into

Your brain is just a social sandwich

Your brain is just a social sandwich

Your brain is just a social sandwich

Your social sandwich needs some review

Your social sandwich needs some re

needs some re

view

From you

### **Judy Gingersnaps**

Hanging around strip joints is an unusual experience. It was a trip. When Sidney Hipple got out of Solomon Mental Health, he lived on Summer Street in Lowell. It was a white building. Shit, I thought we talked about that before, in another story. Well anyways, here it is again:

So like I was saying, Sid was living in this one-room efficiency with the bathroom down the hall. It had a bed, a dresser, a sink, a refrigerator, a stove, and a cabinet, and it was on the first floor.



Next door to Sid lived a woman named Louise. She had also had past stints at Solomon Mental Health -- she was on medication. She was quite a bit overweight, and had a son named Max who came to visit her once in a while. Because of her size, she didn't bathe regularly. But when Sid was in the nut house, a shower was his salvation. A relaxing time, the hot water steaming over your back, that solitude, that serenity, that privateness. Sometimes he'd take two or three showers a day.

Louise wasn't the only person who lived in the building where Sid lived. A guy named Brad, who looked like a young Frank Zappa, lived upstairs with his cousin Lenny. They talked about itmes when they were so broke, they ate mustard on newspaper -- that's true.

Brad was an all right guy, but he was an alcoholic. He was always bitching about his ex-wife and his kids and not seeing them. Another alcoholic lived down the hall on the first floor from Sid, but he doesn't recall his name. But he was a good guy.

One day Sid came home and his apartment door had been removed from its hinges and had disappeared. Two other apartments had the same thing happen to them. As it turned out, Sid and the other two tenants were behind in their rents, and that's what the landlord did until they got paid up. For a couple of days people watched other people's apartments until they got their doors back. That's true you know. If you can imagine an apartment with no door, no entrance door, it could be an unusual experience.

Sid was on welfare, and someone had stolen his foodstamps. (Later on Sid found out that it was Brad's cousin Lenny who stole the foodstamps -- guess he didn't want to eat newspaper with mustard. He should have tried fucking ketchup, at least it won't roll off the paper like mustard will. Didn't even have money to buy a fucking vegetable to wrap it in. When you're broke like that, you're dead broke, and nobody you know gives you any money, because they ain't got none either.

So you're waiting for your welfare check to come in. They come in twice a month. Sid was getting about \$87 each check. Like everybody else's, his was usually gone in three or four days -- at best. Rent was like \$21 a week for that luxurious room he had, and he usually owed people at least \$20, and with the rest of it, he'd buy food or foodstamps. So he never had money.

When his check would come in, he would go down to Adams St, where the Spanish folk hung out, and he'd buy six pin joints for \$5, and get high for a couple of days. Sometimes he'd have a couple of bucks, but most of the time he didn't.

And whether he did, or he didn't, he'd still find a way to hang around a club

called the Three Copper Men, on Fletcher Street in Lowell. Upstairs bands would play on the weekends, and downstairs were strippers. He'd never have any money. Sometimes he'd go in there with just a buck and buy a coke, to have a place to hang around and something to do. Most of the time he wouldn't have any money, and he would tell the waitress that he was waiting for someone.

He never thought about the strippers too much, until one day, inside his building, that white building on Summer Street, a young woman moved in named Judy Gingersnaps. She must have been in her late twenties, very slender, very nice looking, very pleasant. She lived on the third floor. She had a boyfriend named John who would stop over, who was a nice guy. They became friends with Sid and some other people in the building.

When you don't have no money, and you don't have no food, there's only one thing to do: go to one of the local churches, and they'll give you a food order at some local supermarket. But, they have to come to your house to give you the check. Sid went to St. Peter's church, and talked to somebody about a food order for ten or fifteen dollars. They said they would send someone to his house the next day. It just so happened that day, that he was washing he only set of clothes. He would wash them in the shower, take off his clothes, and then shower himself. He ran the stove until they dried. And because he had thrown all of his possessions away months before, he had no other clothes but the clothes on his back. He would have a towel wrapped around himself until they dried, which might take a couple hours.

He knew the people from the church would be coming over, and he needed something to wear. So he asked his neighbor Louise if she had something he could borrow. She gave him a nightgown. He put it on, and was waiting with his door open for the people to arrive. Judy and John came down to leave the building and saw Sid in the nightgown. And remember, Louise was a big woman. They told Sid later that when they got outside, Judy said to John, "Was Sidney wearing a nightgown with ruffles?" Needless to say what the reaction of the church people was when they came by to give him his check.

The next week he was talking to Judy about washing his clothes again, and wanted to stop up and visit her, and she asked him if he wanted to borrow one of her negligees, and he said yeah. Judy said, "You want a white one or a black one?" Sid said, "A black one." To make a long story short, Sid became good friends with Judy and started to hang out at the strip joint where she worked. called Nicky's on Gorham Street.

I don't think that Sid ever saw Judy dance, and if he did, it was only once at Nicky's. Judy would hang around there when she wasn't working, and so would Sid. Judy knew Sid was broke, and sometimes she'd buy him a sloe gin fizz. It was interesting hanging around the strip joint, but after a while that

got tired for Sid. Eventually Judy stopped living there and Sid got a job.

Before Judy stopped stripping, she got a new boyfriend called Heck. He was from Minnesota, and a nice guy. Sid used to stop over and visit some times. Went they weren't making love, they'd let him in. That's where he went on Christmas when he was alone one year. Christmas with Judy and Heck.

Some time later, Sid saw Judy on Merrimack Street, and she said her and Heck were homeless. Sid remembered that Mike of Mike and the Spikes, who was living at 73 Fletcher Street had a doorway from his room to a vacant room. Sid told Judy about this, and took her over to see Mike. Mike, the good sort that he was, didn't mind taking the risk and let them stay next door on the QT. Judy and Heck were good people, and they liked Mike because he was a good guy. Eventually I'm sure, they had to move.

The last time Sid saw Judy, she called him up and said she was moving to New Hampshire and wanted to borrow his hotplate. She stopped over and he gave it to her.

At one time she went back to Minnesota with Heck, but she came back in a couple of weeks -- couldn't stand the boredom. She was an excitement type of woman.

Sid didn't hear anything about her for years, didn't know where she was or what she was doing. Until one day when Sid was hanging out with Johnny B, he mentioned a Judy, and Johnny B said he knew of a Judy, the one he was speaking of. She had been in AA for a number of years and she was doing good. Sid was happy to hear this.

Sid hopes to see Judy in life again some day. They haven't seen each other in eighteen years. But when a guy wears a woman's nightgown under certain circumstances, there's a bond there that can never be broken. That bond is called friendship.

And when you ain't got no money, and you ain't got no foodstamps, and you don't want to eat mustard on newspaper, and you've run out of churches in the neighborhood to hit them up for food orders, sometimes there's someone you can count on, even for just a laugh, or encouragement, or just to listen to you for a minute or two. That's called a friend

